1: Karsten--216 [2]
116, 833, 152

(1916-18) 1935
(1928-29)

Jivaro-1

"It has generally been assumed that among the majority of savage races the sexual instinct is very strongly developed and 'sexual life carried on very intensely' (1) and this generalizing statement is naturally meant to apply to the savages of the New World also. My own impression is that this assertion at any rate does not hold true of the Indians of South America, and particularly not of the tribes with which I am concerned here. When a Jibaro Indian has caught a woman whom he particularly likes, it is natural that at first he gives vent to his passion for her, and he may then have intercourse with her even several times during a night. But excesses of this kind are by no means the general rule among the Jibaros, who on the whole do not indulge in sexual relations more than most white people do, rather less. There is in fact on this point a notable difference between the whites and the mestizos on the one hand and the Indians on the other. The Jibaro Indian's capability of exercising control over himself in the sexual domain is shown by his readiness to submit himself to the prohibition of sexual intercourse during more or less protracted periods. We have already seen the Indians observing

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"1. Westermarck, The History of Human Marriage, I.495 (quoting Malinowsky). Dr. Malinowsky calls his own book, where one single Melanesian tribe is treated of, 'The Sexual Life of Savages.'"

sexual abstinence on many occasions, and other similar instances will presently be mentioned. To the Ecuadorian white or mestizo such control over himself would certainly be impossible."

12: Rivet--608 [2] (no date) 1907 Jívaro
116, 562, 833

Even in the interior arrangement of the house, there is a real separation of the sexes among the Jíbaros, not as clear as among certain peoples, but nonetheless evident. In consequence, the Indians never have intercourse in the dwelling, but always outside, in the cultivated field which surrounds the house.

28: Tessman--361-362 (No date) 1930 Jivaro
116, 584, 833, 595

Women are married off while they are still children, sometimes at the age of four, often before they are born, sometimes, however, at a later date. If the wife is still a child, then she will be brought up by her [362] husband, who will widen her vulva with the finger until at the age of twelve she is ready for coitus.

A Chiwaro has from one to four wives.

34:Harner E-4, 5 (1956-1969)1973 SD9 Jivaro SD9

one afternoon to the house of the girl and her parents, and sleeps that night in the men's end of the house. Before dawn, he leaves the house with a blowgun and goes hunting, attempting to kill a large number of birds and monkeys in order to impress the girl's parents with his competence. When he returns, he offers the game to the girl to cook and he awaits her final decision. If she has decided to marry him, she will squat down beside the suitor when she serves the cooked food and join him in eating it. From that moment on, they are considered husband and wife and will sleep together that night.

The importance of wives in producing food and beer goes far beyond the subsistence requirements of the household itself. Plural wives assure a surplus production which will make possible adequate entertainment of visitors from other households. The Jívaro place a high value on drinking beer and eating (perhaps in that order), so that one's status in a neighborhood is greatly affected by one's generosity with beer and food. No one can expect to have many friends unless he is a good host; and he cannot easily meet the requirements of good hospitality without plural wives as a labor force.

A man also prefers to have plural wives so that one will be available to accompany him when he goes hunting while the other(s) tends the household and garden. The wife who goes with him not only handles the dog and acts as the intermediary with Nunuí, but also assists him by carrying a machete and a basket of manioc and other provisions. Usually the preferred companion for such hunting trips is the youngest wife, who is least likely to be encumbered with children and therefore most willing to go. The wife often looks forward to hunting trips as an opportunity to have sexual intercourse in privacy, away from the rest of the household. Having sexual relations

34:Harner E-4, 5 (1956-1969)1973 SD9 Jivaro SD9

595
on the hunt is, however, viewed as dangerous by the man, it 224
being believed that after intercourse he is particularly sus- 833
ceptible to being bitten by a poisonous snake. Nevertheless, [82]
men often engage in sexual activity when they take their
wives hunting.

Men also claim that they would rather go hunting than to 224
engage in sexual relations with the possible consequence of 833
pregnancy, since babies interfere with the mobility of their 842
wives to accompany them in hunting. Therefore, men usually 595
state that they are reluctant to engage in sexual intercourse
more often than about once every six to eight days. Field
observations, of course, were difficult to make on this point,
but my impression is that these particular statements were
not too inconsistent with their behavior. Men also believe
that having more than one wife decreases, rather than in-
creases, the likelihood of reproduction. The reasoning is that
a second wife permits a man to spend more time hunting and
thus reduces the frequency of his acts of sexual intercourse.
The arduous, mountainous travel required in hunting may
also, in itself, divert potential sexual energies.

While many young wives seem to prefer the childless situ- 842
ation which makes it easy for them to go hunting with their
husbands, an attempt at contraception is usually only made
by single lovers. The attempt essentially employs sympathetic 842
magic rather than herbs and only is believed to work if the 756
male partner is a shaman. The girl brings him a raw chicken 789
egg, he blows on it, and she swallows the egg while he holds
her head underwater in a stream. This act is specific only to
the young man, and is believed to prevent the girl forever
from being impregnated by him. No vegetal abortives of any
kind are known.

Women often do want children and, if no conception takes 842
789